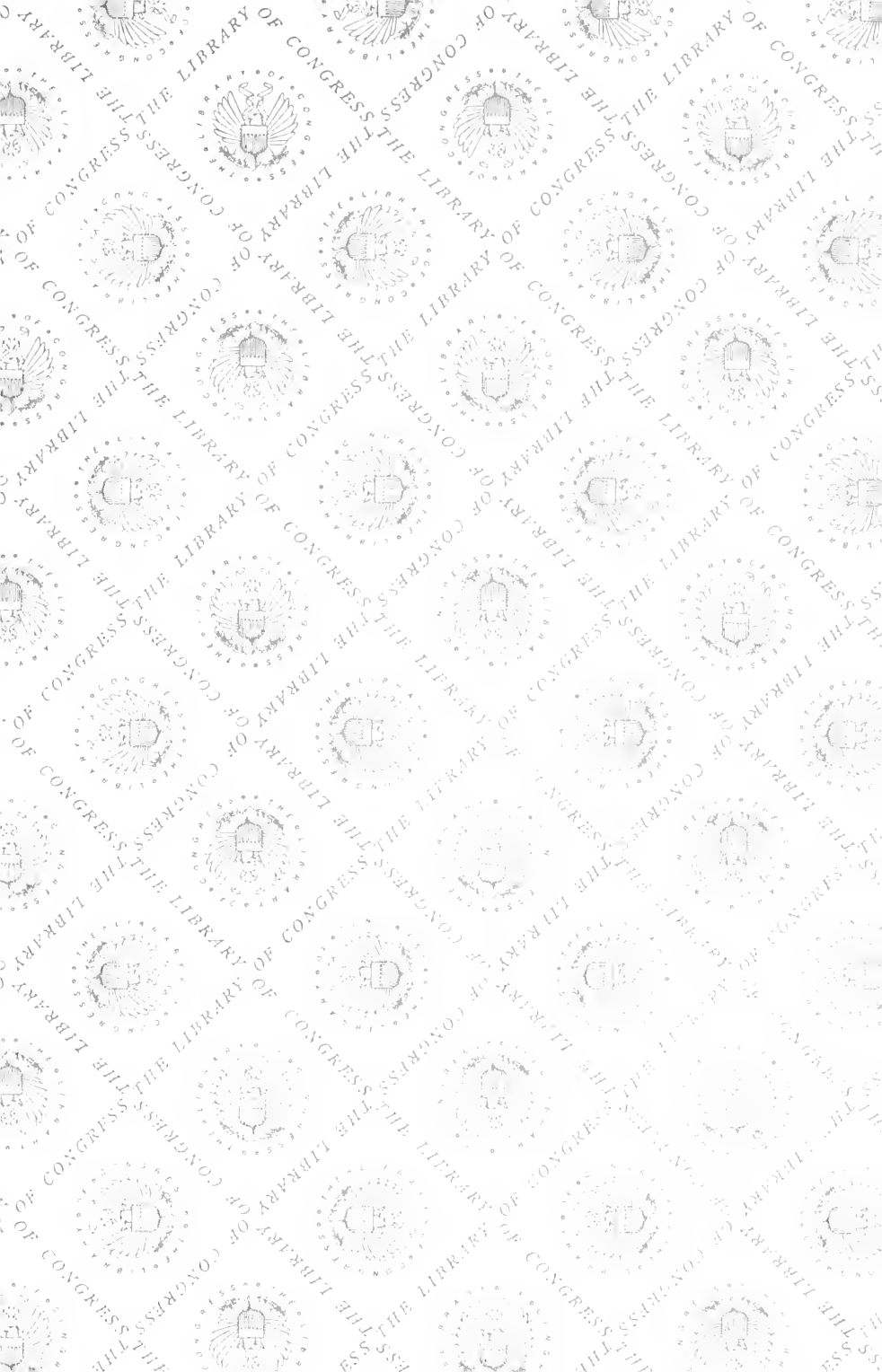


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THE BARKER

BY
CHAS. K. HARRIS

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THE BARKER

A PLAY

CAST OF CHARACTERS

PROF. LEOPOLD VON HOLTZOf the University of Dresden

COUNSELOR HEINRICH VON HOLTZHis half-brother

COUNT DE GRASSEPresident of the Fovortz Society

MEMBERS OF THE FOVORTZ SOCIETY—

Herr Schwartz, Herr Lichtner, Herr Grosscup, Herr Friedenburg
Herr Schultz, Herr Wittenburg.

LEMUEL, SALTERManager of the Wells & Wells Circus

WELCOME WELLSSon of the Proprietor

NORMAN MACK A Lawyer

HUMPY JIM Water Boy

HARRY OAK A Clown

FRIEDA VON HOLTZProfessor Leopold's Daughter

Circus Men, Trainers, Members of the Band, Etc.

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THE BARKER

By

CHAS. K. HARRIS

Professor Von Holtz is professor of languages in a celebrated university at Dresden, Germany. He is a highly respected and a fine old gentleman of the old school. He is about forty-five years of age, soft-voiced and gentle—highly esteemed by all his friends, neighbors and associates throughout Germany.

His wife died in giving birth to a little baby girl, whom he has named Freda. His kind, loving heart was almost broken when his wife was taken away from him, and he felt as though life was not worth living after she had departed, but the cry of his little baby girl ringing in his ears saved his reason as well as his life, and he made up his mind to live for her and her alone.

He is living in the old ancestral home of his forefathers, the home that has been passed down from generation to generation and from son to son.

Living with him is his half brother, Heinrich Von Holtz, son of his father by his second mother, who is also married and has a little boy about Freda's age, named Franz. Heinrich is a rising and ambitious young counselor, with brilliant prospects before him. He, naturally, has great ambitions for his son and loves him as much as the professor loves his own little daughter, Freda.

Heinrich has become associated with a number of young college students who were former chums of his at the University which he attended in his student days, and who had formed a society under the name of The Fovortz, more as a debating society than for any other supposed reasons, but after a time they elected to the presidency young Count de Grasse, a dissolute young nobleman who had been barred from the court circles in Berlin, on account of his socialistic utterances and tendencies. He is a dreamer as well as a firm believer in a German republic, and is against all emperors and kings.

He has gradually interested all the young students into his socialistic beliefs, and they are commencing to think his way.

He has watched, with growing interest, young Counselor Heinrich Von Holtz at all the meetings and is pleased to see the interest Heinrich is taking in all the proceedings.

He has also approached the young man on the possibility of securing his brother, the famous Professor Leopold, to join the society. Heinrich tells him he will be pleased to broach the subject to his brother and feel him out regarding same. De Grasse feels, if he can secure the co-operation of such a famous man as Professor Leopold Von Holtz to join the society, that it will be a great feather in his cap and will bring into their fold many of the most famous and prominent men of Dresden and throughout Germany.

When Heinrich, however, broaches the subject to his brother, the latter positively refuses to have anything to do with the Fovortz Society, or to have anything in common with Count De Grasse, whom he knows by reputation to be a Socialist, and, perhaps, something worse—a Nihilist—and he solemnly advises Heinrich, if he has any respect for himself, or for the family name of Von Holtz, to sever all his connection with this society and to have nothing whatsoever to

do with any of the members of the association, as he has heard it already rumored from a very high source that this society was getting to be a menace in Dresden and, in fact, in Germany, and was being carefully watched by the officers of the Government, and that it was only a question of time, if they but made one mistake, that they would all be placed under arrest.

Young Heinrich is a very stubborn and a hot-tempered man, who thinks he knows his own business best. He argues with his brother that the Fovortz Society is doing a wonderful work among the young men of Dresden and the Vaterland; that it is the coming organization of Germany, and it was only a question of time, in his opinion, that every prominent and learned man of Germany would be numbered among its members.

Nevertheless, Professor Leopold sadly shakes his head and earnestly pleads with his brother to have nothing to do with this organization, as it would only lead to disgrace.

Heinrich then pleads with his brother to attend one of the meetings as his guest and to listen carefully to all the debates that will go on that evening, and after listening to the speeches, if he found anything out of the way or wrong in any of the society's utterances, that he would hand in his resignation.

The Professor, to oblige his brother, accedes to his request, and an appointment is made to attend the very next meeting.

In the meantime, the young Crown Prince of Germany is coming to Dresden to lay the cornerstone for the new Government Grand Opera Theatre—to represent his illustrious father, the Emperor—and Dresden is preparing a great holiday for that auspicious occasion.

At the regular meeting of the Fovortz Society, Professor Leopold informs his brother Heinrich that he has made up his mind to attend, and Heinrich joyfully escorts his brother to the place where the meeting is held.

After Heinrich gives the countersign they enter a room fixed up in the style of a lodge room. A long narrow table stands in the center of the room, surrounded by chairs.

At the further end of the room there is a raised platform with a pedestal and gavel, as well as a large armchair for its president, who has not as yet arrived.

There is a large crowd present that evening, all talking loudly, gesticulating and arguing on dozens of subjects, smoking and drinking and a scene of good fellowship pervading the room. When the Professor and Heinrich enter there is a lull for a moment and then a great deal of applause and cheering when the Professor is announced, as he is well known to each and every student in Dresden. His hand is shaken by nearly all present and they try to make him feel at home among them. He sits down and accepts one of the long pipes and listens silently and attentively, while several subjects are talked about from the rostrum.

Heinrich is in his glory as everything is going along smoothly, and he feels that the Professor will have no objections in the future to his belonging to this society and will, perhaps, be anxious to join himself.

The President is then announced and all stand at attention as Count De Grasse enters the room and takes his position upon the platform. He takes his gavel and raps once for silence and for the society to come to order. The room being well filled with tobacco smoke, he does not recognize Professor Leopold, who has been sitting next to his brother at the long table.

After the roll call and all the preliminaries of a regular meeting, Count De Grasse rises and holds his hand up for silence and informs the members of the coming event for which Dresden is preparing—the arrival of the Crown Prince, and he launches into a fiery speech, denouncing all crowned heads as well as all those connected with royalty, and after denouncing them all in unmeasured terms, he says he would like to hear from them one by one, what they think of it, as the time had come for action.

Dead silence has greeted the words of the president when he has reseated himself, and all those assembled that evening begin to realize the seriousness of the occasion.

The Professor has listened with blanched face to the appalling words of the President, sitting almost paralyzed with fright.

Herr Schwartz, one of the most rabid of the young students, jumps upon his chair and cries, "Down with the Crown Prince," "Eliminate him from off the face of the earth," etc.

Followed by young Leichtner, Schultz, and in fact a half dozen of the organization. Several of them try to counsel patience, and they are hooted down and cry "The vote, the vote!"

The President put his motion to the house and with only a few "Noes" his motion is carried.

The President again stands upon the rostrum and says:

"Prepare the ballot box," said the president, which was immediately done and which contained twenty-five white balls and one black ball.

"One of you here to-night will be chosen by us to eliminate the Crown Prince. The one drawing the black ball will be the chosen one. Let the drawing begin."

In silence the box is passed around by one of the students to each and every member gathered around the table, and only the deep breathing of the students can be heard as one by one they place their trembling hands into the box and draw forth one of the shiny ivory balls. Some of them heave a sigh of relief when they see the ball they have drawn forth is white.

Young Heinrich Von Holtz, whose turn has come to draw, hesitates for just an instant, then, with a bold hand, draws out one of the small balls, while his brother, Leopold, looks fearfully on, fascinated by the sight.

They both give one look at the ball and then Heinrich sinks as though lifeless into his chair. The ball is black.

For a moment there is intense silence throughout the room, and then the President arose and ordered Heinrich to stand up and to show the ball to all assembled in the room, which Heinrich, trembling, does, and then in a solemn voice the President says:

"As a sworn member of the Fovortz Society, sworn to obey its rules and regulations, you are hereby designated to carry out the will of this Society. We will leave all preliminaries to you. You will also be protected by this Society with all the means within its power. May good luck attend you."

Heinrich collapses into his chair.

Professor Leopold has covered his ashen face in his hands, broken in spirit by the thought that his brother would be compelled to do so foul a deed, that would shake the foundations of the world and bring disgrace to the name of Von Holtz forever.

Just at that instant there is a loud rap upon the door, while all those assembled glance startled at each other and the President holds up his hand for silence. The rapping continues and a voice is heard to exclaim "Open, in the name of the Law."

When no answer is given the door is broken down. Each and every window is covered so there will be no escape, by a uniformed officer. The police enter the room through the broken door and immediately place all those in the room under arrest.

While this is going on the Professor says to Heinrich in a low voice: "Give me the black ball, quick. Keep silent, leave it to me. I will try and get you out of it."

As the inspector calls forth the names of each and every student assembled they pass to the right of the room with an officer beside them. The inspector is startled to see Professor Leopold Von Holtz among those present and can hardly realize so famous a man is a member of a society of this kind.

They are all taken to the office of the chief of police and their names and pedigrees taken down.

At the trial the Professor swears that his brother Heinrich was absolutely innocent of any wrong doing; that HE was the guilty man; that he had urged his brother to become a member, but his brother continually refused to do so; that he had urged him to come to that one meeting and then if he did not wish to join after that night, he would not be asked again; therefore he was there only as an innocent spectator.

They ask him who had drawn the black ball. He hesitates for a moment and draws forth the fatal ball with head bowed in shame.

His brother Heinrich is exonerated. All of the other members are sentenced from one to ten years in prison. President De Grasse, on account of his high connections, was sentenced to three years, while Professor Leopold was banished from Germany forever, as they knew that the banishment would be worse than death for him. They gave him twenty-four hours to leave the country forever and for aye.

Upon the brother's arrival at their home that evening the Professor takes his little baby daughter and places her in the arms of his brother and says:

"Raise your hand on high and take the sacred oath of our Church that you will protect my little daughter Freda from all harm, and that when she becomes of age you will tell her the truth. If I live until she reaches the age of fifteen send her to me in America, where I intend to go. If, in the meantime, I should die, see to it that you will be a father to her. Also swear that you will never again have anything to do in any way, shape or manner with any Socialistic or Anarchist society as long as you live, and that you will live a clean, honorable and honest life. My estate, all my property in its entirety, I leave in your charge for my daughter. You will find my will in yonder safe. If I die have same opened and read in the regular way. If the Government should ever allow me to return, let me know and I will come back."

While his brother falls on his knees before him sobbing as though his heart would break, promising to never break his oath.

The Professor packs his trunk and is driven away to the station where he catches a train that takes him across the border and has just time to catch a steamer sailing for America.

* * *

Three years have now elapsed.

Young Heinrich Von Holtz, true to the promise made to the Professor, keeps clear from all shady societies and has become a respected member of society. He has risen to a very high position as a counselor in Dresden and is highly respected by the entire community, who all feel sorry for him for the disgrace brought upon him by his brother, the Professor. He has received several letters from the Professor, who informs him that he has arrived in America safe and sound, and gives him the address where he can always be found, and to keep him posted regarding his little daughter Freda and to carefully take care of the estate and to send him money from time to time.

After a year Heinrich has stopped writing to the Professor as he has other ideas and schemes which now claim his attention, and one of them is that as his brother can never return to Germany, why should he continue his correspondence, when it was only a question of time the estate would belong to him and his son in its entirety. So the Professor's appealing letters for money and for news of his daughter remain unanswered.

Young Count De Grasse, having served his three years, leaves the prison almost a wreck and takes to drink. He is almost unrecognizable. No one seeing him would ever recognize the dashing young Count De Grasse, former president of the Fovortz Society.

All his old cronies have disappeared and he knows of no one whom he can ask for money with the exception of Heinrich Von Holtz, and he makes up his mind to call and see him.

Heinrich is thunder-struck when De Grasse forces his way past the butler into his home and starts back in alarm when he sees De Grasse, whom he hardly recognizes.

"I don't blame you," exclaims De Grasse, "for appearing surprised at my appearance. You would look the same as I do if you had served three years in prison, which you should have done. What's become of your brother, the Professor. I don't see him around."

"Hush, hush, for God's sake," says Heinrich. "Not so loud. The Professor is in America and well taken care of. I send him money regularly and am trying to secure the consent of the Government to lift his banishment so that he may return to his home."

"Well, I hope you are," said De Grasse, "because if you don't you ought to be ashamed of yourself, to allow your brother to take your place."

"I didn't want to accept his sacrifice," said his brother, "but he compelled me to it."

"Well, be that as it may," said De Grasse, "what are you going to do about me."

When, just at that instant, little Freda, who is now three years of age, comes running into the room with her nurse running after her.

"Take her out, take her out," cried Heinrich immediately.

"Hello," said De Grasse, "whose kid is that?"

"It's the Professor's," said Heinrich.

"So he left the little girl here, did he, and you are looking after her?"

"Yes," said Heinrich.

"Well, you just see that you do, if you know what's good for you. Now, see here," said De Grasse, "I want to talk business with you. I've got to have money and I want to get out of this country, and you've got to help me."

"What do you want?"

"I want one thousand dollars down, and one thousand for the next ten years, and I'll never bother you again as long as I live."

"I'll give it to you," said Heinrich, "upon one condition."

"Well, name it."

"That you leave for America immediately and take with you little Freda Von Holtz. Give her back to her father, who you will find at this address in America. If, of course, the child should be taken sick upon the boat, or should fall overboard by accident, I will send you five thousand dollars immediately upon receipt of a cablegram saying 'All is Well;' do you understand?"

"Do I understand?" said De Grasse, "I should think I do. I thought I was bad, but you take the cake. Well, you've got me all right, and you've also got the power, influence and the money, and all I've got is a prison record, so I'll accept your proposition."

"The child," said Heinrich, "will be sent to you to the steamer. You take the train to-night, do you understand?"

"I understand, all right—just leave it to me," and he takes his departure.

The child is sent, as directed, to the steamer, and placed in the hands of De Grasse, while Heinrich heaves a sigh of relief and gleefully rubs his hands as he smiles to himself in his study. All is well; his brother dare not return and the child will disappear and all of Leopold's vast estate now belongs to him and his only son, Franz.

Count De Grasse, having secured a new lease of life, feels like a new man. Cleanly shaven and a new suit of clothes upon his back and money in his pocket, he feels that life is just commencing all over again for him.

He has no intention of losing sight of little Freda. He has nothing to gain by her death, where, if she lives, he can hold her as a living threat over the head of Heinrich Von Holtz and thereby secure all the money he needs from time to time.

On his arrival in America he sends a cable to Heinrich informing him that little Freda fell overboard and was drowned and his mind could now be at rest.

Count De Grasse places little Freda in a convent under the name of Freda De Grasse, and then makes up his mind to enjoy himself. It is only a question of time when his money gives out. He spends it upon the races and in gambling and drinking, until at last it is all gone. Knowing he must find work or starve, he then secures a position as ringmaster in the Wells & Wells Circus, being a first-class rider and of handsome and distinguished appearance he has no trouble in securing an engagement.

* * *

Fourteen years have now passed away and he has sent to the Convent for Freda, who has joined him in the circus, where he teaches her to become very efficient in horseback riding as well as an expert trapeze performer.

She is now one of the feature acts of the circus, while De Grasse has sunk lower and lower, not working any longer, but living upon the earnings of Freda. The management would have been ridden of him long ere this if it were not on account of the great drawing powers of Freda, who, they think, is De Grasse's daughter.

* * *

In the meantime Professor Leopold for many years has been teaching languages. His heart was almost broken when he received a letter from his

brother many years before that his little daughter, Freda, had been drowned. Life held nothing for him after that.

One of his acquaintances who lived with him at his boarding house in New York and who had taken a great fancy to him, was a member of a German circus band. After learning that the Professor could not secure any more pupils he informed him that he would try and secure him a position with the circus that he was going to join, as they always needed a barker. He brings the Professor to see the manager of the circus, Mr. Lemuel Salter who, after looking at the Professor over, shakes his head dubiously, but when the Professor starts to talk in his beautiful soft, modulated voice and clear pronounciation, Salter realizes that he has just the man he is looking for, and the Professor is engaged as Barker with the Wells & Wells Circus.

He has been with them for about one year and has grown into its ways and is loved and respected by all of the circus folks from the ticket-taker down to the tent men and water boy. He does not recognize the Count De Grasse, who was the former ringmaster of this circus, but De Grasse recognizes him immediately but makes up his mind to keep silent and let things drift.

Freda takes a great fancy to the Professor, while the old Professor simply idolizes her, never dreaming that it is his own daughter, and so fate has brought them all together under the same tent.

Lemuel Salter, the manager of this circus for the past fifteen years, is a typical circus manager; big, strong, rough and a thorough circus man from his head to his toes. He rules his men with an iron hand. They all fear him, although they respect him as a manager. He has fallen desperately in love with Freda, who loathes the very sight of him, but does not care to come to an open break on account of her supposed father, De Grasse, who has been urging Freda to marry Salter, believing that her future, as well as his own, would be assured.

Salter has been making all sorts of propositions to her father and piling him with drink in the hopes of having him force his daughter to marry him, but up to the present time has not succeeded.

The Wells & Wells Circus has been a prosperous concern for fifteen years. Upon the death of Mr. Wells, the proprietor of the show, his entire estate, including several million dollars worth of real estate as well as the circus, was willed to his only son, Welcome Wells, who has remained in college until he became of age. Upon the death of his father he was sent for by the attorney of the estate, Norman Mack, who was pleased to see him and who informed him of the contents of his father's will, which specially stipulated that he must neither sell or part with the circus as it was through this circus that all his money was made. His lawyer also informed him that the circus was not paying as it formerly did, and that it was being run with a loss and he saw no reason for this whatsoever, as from private reports received the circus was crowded at every performance.

Welcome, who is now twenty-one years of age and a strong, handsome, manly young chap, informs his attorney that the only way to find out what was going on would be to join the circus under a non de plume and accept a position under Lemuel Salter, the manager, and remain with them for the balance of the season to keep his eyes open and he may perhaps find out who was doing the grafting.

Mr. Mack gives him a letter of introduction to Lemuel Salter, asking him to give this young man a position as he is a friend of a friend of his.

Young Welcome arrives one day in a small town where the circus is ap-

pearing and is immediately engaged as private secretary to Lemuel Salter, the manager. After being with the circus several weeks he makes himself popular with all the employees, who have all taken a great fancy to this handsome young fellow who shares his last dollar with them and is so kind and sympathetic to them all. He has taken a great liking to Professor Leopold, the Barker, and in conversation with him learns that Leopold is not an ordinary man, especially not the ordinary Barker that is found with a circus. He tries to pump the old fellow, but Leopold sadly shakes his head and tells him, "What's the use, the past is dead. Do not awaken it."

He also meets Freda De Grasse, and it is a case of love at first sight. It does not take him long to find out which way the wind is blowing, that Lemuel Salter is madly infatuated with Freda and that she does not care a snap of her fingers for him. Freda believes Welcome to be just a private secretary, but his kind, sunny nature, has entirely won her heart.

Salter has placed entire confidence in young Wells, as he finds that he is an expert accountant, and his books have never been kept in such splendid shape before.

Young Wells has found a great many discrepancies. He sees where his predecessor must have been a tool of Salter's, as bills have all been made to appear doubled when sent in to the lawyer, and the balance was put into Salter's private purse. At first Salter allowed the books to be kept straight, but eventually tried to feel out Wells and told him he could make a little extra money by simply making the bills out double instead of the regular way; that he would take good care of him and that the manager of the estate was getting enough out of it, as it was, and that the poor circus folks always get the worst of it. Welcome agrees to fall into his ways.

After he had all the proof necessary he wired to Norman Mack to come on and spring the trap, and Mack immediately wired him that he is on his way.

One night after Freda's performance and she had left the ring with the applause of the vast audience ringing in her ears, Salter, who has been watching her performance, follows her into her dressing room, where the little hunchback, Jimmy Wilson, the water boy, is pouring out a glass of water for her. When she sees Salter she is somewhat startled.

"Don't be afraid," says Salter, "I just want to congratulate you on your excellent performance to-night. I tell you, Freda, I'm dead gone on you and have been from the very first time you joined the circus. I have made a star out of you and you are now one of the big features. Your dad and I are old pals and he is getting old and feeble and I don't believe he will be with us much longer in this world, and he wants to see you happily married before he dies. Why not marry me and have it over with?"

"I cannot marry you, Mr. Salter."

"Why can't you?"

"Because I don't love you. I must marry the man I love."

"Oh, that will come all right in time. I'll treat you like a queen, Freda, and you won't have to work any more if you marry me. I've got money enough to buy a circus of my own."

"There are other things beside money in this world, Mr. Salter."

"See here, Freda, are you stuck on anybody else in this circus?"

"You have no right to ask me that question," said Freda.

"I thought so," said Salter. "I've caught you several times talking to that

young secretary of mine, Saunders. Now listen here, Freda, it's got to stop. Do you understand? It's got to stop. You're going to marry me or, by God, you'll not marry anybody else."

Little Jimmy Wilson, the hump-back water boy, has been listening to the conversation and seeing that Salter was getting angry with his little favorite, Freda, makes up his mind to call Professor Leopold to her aid. While he is going in search of the Professor Grasse enters the tent to see his daughter, and together they urge upon her to marry Salter.

While they are pleading with her as well as threatening her, Professor Leopold enters the tent and Freda immediately rushes into his arms and, as he kindly strokes her hair he says: "What do they want of you Freda, my child?"

"Oh, Professor," sobbed Freda, "my father wants me to marry Mr. Salter and I don't love him, and I just won't."

"There, there, child," said the Professor, "never mind, they can't force you to marry in this country if you don't want to marry."

"Is that so?" said Salter, angrily. "What are you buttin' in here for, Professor. Get out of the tent or I'll throw you out."

Mr. Salter," said the Professor quietly, as the girl clings to his arm, "she is not for you—she is not of your kind."

"What do you know about it?" said Salter. "Now I see it all. You are the stumbling block that has come between Freda and I."

"Come here, Freda," said Grasse, who is half drunk, as usual. "I am your father and you will do what I want you to do." But she still clings to the Professor, looking up appealingly into his face.

With an angry snarl Salter makes a grab to take Freda from the Professor, who throws up one of his arms to shield her, when Salter, with a blow, strikes the Professor, who falls like a stone at Freda's feet, while she falls upon him sobbing pitifully.

Humpty Jimmy had not been idle in the meantime, and knowing of Welcome's interest in Freda, runs to get him. He enters the tent just as the old man is struck down, while Freda hurriedly stoops down and tries to revive the old Professor.

"Who did that?" said Welcome quietly. "Who was the coward that struck that old man?"

"Well, if you want to know," said Salter angrily, "I am the man. He butted in when he had no right to do so, and he got all that was coming to him, and I'll do the same to you if you don't get out of here pretty quick."

With that Salter moves as though to strike Welcome, when, with a well directed blow Welcome smashes him upon the jaw and floors the manager. Then he lifts the old Professor slowly to his feet, who is still dazed, but slowly recovering from the blow and places his arm around his shoulder as well as Freda's, as Salter struggles to his feet, mad with rage.

Welcome says—"Do you want any more of it? If you do I'll give you all that is coming to you."

When Salter says—"I'll fix you good and plenty. You'll never get out of this circus alive," and immediately gives the well known cry of "Hey, rube," which is a signal of danger and well known to all circus men throughout the world.

On hearing the cry the employees immediately grab whatever they can lay their hands on and make a rush for the tent where the cry comes from, thinking that their manager is being assaulted by some outsider.

As they crowd into the dressing room Salter points to Welcome Wells and says: "That man is a spotter, some damn spy who has struck me. Get him, quick."

The situation is serious. The men stand transfixed as they cannot believe that Welcome Wells is a spotter, but Salter urges them on to club him, when suddenly from the midst of the excited crowd Norman Mack, the lawyer, who has been an interested spectator, and who has arrived in time for the performance that evening, unknown to either the manager or Welcome, says, "Stand back, men, or you will rue it as long as you live."

"Another but-in," says Salter. "Throw him out also, men."

"I warn you," said Norman Mack, "not to lay your hands upon this man. I am Norman Mack, attorney for the Wells & Wells circus."

"Well, suppose you are," interrupts Salter, "what's that got to do with that Spotter?"

"Good Heavens, man, don't be a fool. Don't you know who he is?"

"Well, who is he?" exclaims Salter excitedly.

"He is Welcome Wells, the proprietor of this circus, and the son of old man Wells, your former boss."

"Good God!" says Salter, falling back almost into the arms of his men. "I am a big fool." While all the men crowd around Welcome and shake his hands with joy and place him upon their shoulders and march him around the circus.

At last the excitement has died down and the employees of the circus have wended their ways to their sleeping tents. Lemuel Salter has apologized to Welcome and to Freda and the Professor. He said he had lost his temper and that it would never occur again; that he was glad to welcome the son of old man Wells and that Welcome's father had always trusted him and he hoped his son would do the same, and he would try to merit his approval, which Welcome took with a grain of salt, and not caring to show Salter that he bore any grudges against him, accepted his apology, while Salter made up his mind to get even with him before the season was over.

Welcome introduces Freda to his attorney, Norman Mack, and Welcome tells Mack confidentially that he intends to make Freda his wife, even though her father is a drunkard. He has fallen desperately in love with her and will not be satisfied until he marries her.

Mack has no objections, as he has been impressed very much by Freda's charming manner.

Welcome declares his love to Freda that night, but she tells him that as long as her father is living and keeps on drinking the way he has, that she cannot marry him, as she would not care to leave her father at the present time. Welcome pleads with her that he will place her father in some home where he will be taken care of and perhaps cured of drinking, but she tells him to wait a while as she loves Welcome with all her heart and soul, and to just have a little patience, which he promises to do.

In the meantime Lemuel Salter bides his time to get even with Welcome Wells, as well as Freda. He meets De Grasse one night who is intoxicated, as usual, and De Grasse blurts out that Freda is not his child; that she is of one

of the best families in Dresden; that he does not care any more what becomes of her.

Upon hearing this Lemuel Salter makes up his mind to cut the net into which Freda makes her head-long dive from her trapeze, which will kill, maim or cripple her after the dive. While he is planning to do this with Grasse, Humpy Jim is sleeping beside a pile of canvas upon which the speakers are sitting, and is horrified when he hears what they intend doing. He is too scared to move, knowing full well if they find him they will surely kill him. They leave soon after and arrange to meet the next day to perfect their plans.

After they have gone, Humpy Jim, more dead than alive, creeps to the tent of the Barker, awakens him and, in a horrified voice, tells him what he had overheard.

The Barker tells Jim to go to sleep and rest; that all will be well. He then dresses and goes to the tent of Welcome Wells, awakens him and tells him what Humpy Jim has overheard. Wells thanks the Professor and tells him that they will both foil the conspirator's plans.

The next day everything goes on as usual before and behind the scenes. Welcome interviews four of his most trusted men and tells them what he wants them to do that night; that they are to take the places of the other four employees who are supposed to stand by the net, into which Freda makes her dive. He explains to them that the net has been cut by some scoundrels to maim Freda, which horrifies the employees, but he does not tell them who the conspirators are.

He also instructs them not to touch the net until Freda starts to make her dive, and then to immediately grasp the corners of the net and hold same tight, so that Freda will be caught safe and not be dashed to the ground.

The scene now changes to the interior of the big circus. The ringmaster is announcing the feature act: "Mlle. Freda, the celebrated trapeze performer will leap head-long from the trapeze at the top of the tent into the net many feet below, the most daring leap ever attempted in the circus world. She will be accompanied by her father to the top of the trapeze on a separate rope, who will pull the trapeze from under her feet, so she could make a clear leap."

Salter, knowing if Freda is maimed or killed that Grasse would always hold him in his power and would blackmail him, makes up his mind to also cut the rope that pulls Grasse to the top of the tent, and his weight would part the rope and also dash him to the ground, thereby killing two birds with one stone.

The moment has arrived. Freda is through with her performance upon the trapeze and is smiling and kissing her hands to the vast audience, who are cheering her wildly before making her leap into the net.

Her father, dressed in spangles, is being pulled up slowly to the top of the tent, and all eyes are now eagerly watching him to give the signal and pull the trapeze from under her feet, while below Welcome Wells is standing gazing up at them both, while his four men are standing near the corners of the net, awaiting their time to grasp it and hold it taut when Freda leaps. In the center of the ring Salter stands also gazing up at Freda and her father and waiting for the time that will blot them both out of his life forever and securing his vengeance upon Welcome Wells for interfering with his plans.

De Grasse arrives at the top, gives the signal and pulls the trapeze from under Freda's feet, and down she dashes into the net, which is immediately grabbed by Welcome's four men, and she lands safely into the net midst the cheering of the audience.

Just at that moment an agonizing cry is heard from above. The rope holding her father parts, and with a scream of agony he is dashed to the earth below where he lies in a huddled mass.

There is intense silence for a moment, and then the circus employees immediately gather around and carry him to the dressing room, while the ringmaster makes a short speech to the audience and says that the man is not seriously injured, and the circus goes on. While, in the tent, surrounded by Freda, Wells, the circus physician, the Professor and many of the circus performers, De Grasse lies dying.

* * *

While the years are speedily passing all has gone well with Heinrich Von Holtz in Dresden. His baby boy, young Franz, is now twenty-one years of age and has grown to be a fine, tall, handsome, manly young chap. His father has sent him to the university at Leipzig and is very proud of his young son. Heinrich has never again joined any socialistic society and has taken his brother Leopold's advice. He is now known as one of the best attorneys in Dresden. He has handled the estate wisely and well. Thinking that Freda Von Holtz is dead and that his half brother, the Professor, is an outcast on the face of the earth, he seems secure and content, and the future looks bright and rosy for him.

His young son, Franz, has been very desirous of joining one of the exclusive societies in his college, and has his friend present his name, but to his surprise and dismay he is black-balled, which almost breaks his heart.

His young friend tries to soothe him, but to be blackballed in one of the societies of that college bears with it a certain disgrace. He tells his friend he cannot see why it has occurred. He did not know that he had made any enemies. He had always lead a clean and upright life and was no wilder than any of the other boys of the college.

His friend then tells him it is not on his account, but his uncle, Professor Leopold, fifteen years ago, had disgraced his university at Dresden by joining an anarchist society and drew the black ball, whereby he was to kill the young Crown Prince, and that he was banished to America, and, owing to that blot upon the family name he could not join the exclusive society and, therefore, was black-balled.

Young Franz leaves the university for home. His father, knowing nothing of what had occurred, is very much surprised to see him. He tells his father he is not going back to finish his studies. He is never going back again, in fact, to any college.

His father urges him to tell him the truth, which he does.

"Why did you not tell me about my uncle. No one told me," cried the boy. "No one in college ever said a word to me about what my uncle had done. He must have been an awful scoundrel. To think of him wanting to kill our Crown Prince and so disgrace our name."

While he is speaking his father is gazing at his son in astonishment. What if his son should ever learn the truth. Would he turn away, loathing forever the father who loved him? and as he stands gazing fearfully into Franz's tearful face he says to himself: "My son has found me out because of the wrong I have done to my brother and his daughter. I will surely lose the love and respect of the only being on earth whom I love. I see there is but one way—my attitude is plain," says the conscious-stricken Heinrich to himself. "I must find and restore my brother Leopold to his rightful place again in Dresden and then,

perhaps after I have done that I will tell my son the truth and he may forgive me," and then he says with a voice choking with emotion:

"Your Uncle Leopold was a good man, my son. He was a martyr. Listen to this letter which I have just received from the Government in which they say that the ban against Professor Leopold Von Holtz has been raised and they have notified me to write to him if he is still alive, to tell him to return again to his old home and his old position and all his friends once again; that one of the convicts in prison, who was a former member of the Fovortz Society, has confessed upon his dying bed that Professor Leopold was not a member of the society, nor did he draw the black ball. But further than that the convict did not confess, and the Government believe this dying man, and so, my son, you see your Uncle Leopold was more sinned against than sinning."

"We will go together, you and I, to America, find him and bring him back to his old home again, and the stain on the name of Von Holtz will be removed."

Franz seizes his father's hand, while his eyes sparkle with joy and kisses it warmly. "That will be fine, father, let us go immediately." So father and son both prepare to leave immediately for America.

They arrive safely in America. They then look up where Wells & Wells circus is playing and find it is in a small town in Ohio, and Heinrich makes up his mind to lose no time but to leave immediately and visit this circus in the hopes of finding that his brother is still with them.

They arrive in the town, buy tickets in the reserved section and settle down to see the performance.

As the barker has no part in the large circus they naturally do not see him and are much disappointed. They are fascinated with Freda and are especially interested in the great dive which she is about to make, but as De Grasse enters the ring Heinrich starts back in amazement and grabs his son by the arm and says: "Look, I know that man; he is the Count De Grasse. I knew him years ago. I must meet him. He can perhaps give us the information we are seeking."

"Wait," said Franz, "until after the performance." He was also much interested in the dive about to be made, and when Grasse's rope breaks and he is dashed to the ground both father and son start up in horror and make their way toward the tent in which De Grasse is dying.

Heinrich pushes his way into the tent to where Grasse lies. He asks the physician whether there is any hope and he sadly shakes his head and says: "Do you know him?" Heinrich says: "Yes, I would like to speak to him if I can. He is from my home town in Germany."

"Well, speak quick, whatever you have to say," said the physician, as he has only a short time to live."

Heinrich kneels besides Grasse, waving his son away as he wishes to speak to him alone. He says: "Count, Count, look at me. Don't you remember me?" and the Count looks at him sadly and wistfully, his pale face twitching—just moves his head slowly and says "Yes. You've come in time to see me die. You've come in time to right a great wrong."

"Speak quick, man, tell me, my brother Leopold, is he still alive?"

"Yes, he is the Barker of this circus."

"Thank God for that," said Heinrich.

"There's something else I want to speak to you of," said De Grasse. "His daughter, Freda Von Holtz."

"Yes, yes, what of her," said Heinrich excitedly.

"I did not carry out your wishes," said the Count. "I lied to you when I wired you 'All is well.'"

"Yes, yes, go on," said Heinrich.

"She is alive and well."

"Do you mean to tell me that Freda Von Holtz, the daughter of Professor Leopold, is alive?"

"Yes," said the Count faintly. "She is Mlle. Freda, the girl you saw diving from the trapeze into the net. I taught her how to ride and how to perform, and she has been supporting me all these years. She's a good girl."

"How did the accident occur to you?"

"It was no accident," said the Count. "It was a plot to kill me, as well as Freda."

"A plot?" said Heinrich. "What do you mean?"

"I was in Manager Salter's power. We both cut the ropes that held the net which Freda was to dive into."

"Cut the net?" cried Heinrich. "What for?"

"So Freda would be crippled or maimed for life. Because another man loved her and Salter was jealous of the other man."

"And you were a party to this plot?"

"Yes."

"And how did you happen to fall from the trapeze?"

"It was probably cut by Salter, who wished to get me out of the way," and with that last remark Count De Grasse fell back, dead.

Then the physician calls to Freda and says:

"Your father is dead," and she falls to her knees beside him, sobbing, while the Professor comes and puts his arms about her and gently leads her away.

While he is taking her to her own tent he comes face to face with his brother Heinrich, and the old Professor stands gazing at his brother as though in a dream.

"You, you?" said the Professor. "Am I dreaming?"

"No," said his brother, "it is no dream. I have come to get you and bring you back again to Dresden. The Government have sent me to get you. They have forgiven you."

"Forgiven me? Forgiven what?" said the Professor. "Forgiven me for something I did not do. Forgiven me for something I was innocent of, and now they want me to come back? I will not go. Why should I? The best years of my life are gone. I have nothing to live for. My little daughter Freda is dead. I have no child to soothe me in my old age. What have I to live for? Even you forgot me. For fourteen years I waited for a letter from you. I waited for money. You neglected me. You did not answer any of my letters. You let me starve in America, in a strange land and among strange people, and now you come and say the Government has forgiven me. But I have not forgiven you."

"Stop, stop," said Heinrich. "This is my son Franz. Don't disgrace me before him."

"Disgrace you?" cried the Professor. "What did you care for my disgrace when I was banished from Germany? What did you care for my sorrows and

troubles? But that is over with. I will not go back with you to Germany. I shall remain here."

"And you will not forgive me?" said Heinrich, appealing pitiously to his brother.

"No, I shall never forgive you. Neither shall I ever forget the wrong you have done me."

"The wrong he has done you?" said Franz excitedly. "Why, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. My father protected you when you drew the black ball to kill the Crown Prince. It was he that pleaded with the Government to lift the ban against you. It was you who disgraced the family name. The first who ever disgraced the name of Von Holtz." And as the young man was continuing excitedly to roast the old Professor his father steps in between him and says:

"Stop, stop, Franz, for God's sake!"

"So," said the old Professor, "you even told your son that it was I that drew the black ball. You ought to be ashamed of yourself. You could at least have told him the truth. Tell him now. If you don't, I will."

"Speak, father," said Franz. "What does he mean?"

"If he tells the truth," said the Professor, "he will tell you what I mean," and Heinrich turns to his son slowly and says. "He is right. It was I who drew the black ball. It was I who was a Nihilist. Your Uncle Leopold saved my life that night in the anarchist's den. He took the blame upon himself and all the punishment, too, that went with it, to shield me—me!"

"Father," said Franz, turning away from him in horror. "How could you do a thing of this kind," while his father cowered before him.

"What does it all mean, Professor?" said Freda. "Who are you? Are you not what you are supposed to be?"

"He is Professor Leopold Von Holtz, professor of languages of the University of Dresden," said Heinrich. I am his half-brother, Heinrich Von Holtz, who did him a great wrong, and I have come to America to undo it as far as it lies in my power to do so, for the sake of my son, Franz."

"I feel sure that you will forgive me," said Heinrich, "when I tell you some good news. It is about your little daughter, Freda."

"Freda!" cried the Professor. "She was drowned many years ago, so you wrote me."

"I thought so, too," said Heinrich, "but God willed otherwise. I sent her to you fourteen years ago with the Count De Grasse to America and he wrote me that she was lost from aboard the ship one night and was drowned."

As he speaks the Professor stands gazing into his face amazed and looking pitiously at his brother. "Little Freda," he says, "was coming to me and I never knew it."

"Do you believe in miracles?" said Heinrich.

"The days of miracles are past," said the Professor.

"No," said Heinrich, "you are wrong; the days of miracles are not passed. I sent your little daughter to you when she was three years of age, in care of Count De Grasse, to America, and told him to place her with you. When he arrived in America he cabled me that she had been drowned. He lied to me; she was not drowned. He kept her for himself to make money out of her. He made her a performer. Look, brother, can't you guess?"

As the Professor, with eyes streaming with tears, stands gazing helplessly

at his beautiful daughter, Freda, who is also standing as though in a trance, looking upon her real father. While the Professor slowly opens his arms and Freda, with a cry of joy, falls into them, sobbing as though her heart would break.

During this interesting climax Welcome Wells and his Attorney, Norman Mack, stand by, interested spectators, and at that moment Lemuel Salter comes hurriedly into the tent, very much excited and somewhat under the influence of liquor, and in a rough manner says: "What is all this excitement about? Some one tells me that someone's been killed here. Here you, people," said he, turning roughly to Heinrich, and his son, "What are you strangers doing in this tent? Who gave you permission to enter here?" As Heinrich and his son both look in astonishment at him.

"We were friends of Count De Grasse, the man who lies there dead," says Heinrich. "Who are you and what authority have you for talking to us in this manner?"

"I am Lemuel Salter, manager of this circus, and don't you forget it."

"So you are Lemuel Salter," said Heinrich. Then turning to Wells says: "Will you kindly inform me who the proprietor of this circus is?"

"I am," says Welcome Wells.

"Then arrest that man," said Heinrich, pointing to Salter. "He is the man who cut the rope that sent Count De Grasse to his death. It was his name that the Count breathed in my ear as he lay dying. He also cut the ropes of the net as well, in which Freda was to dive."

"You lie," screamed Salter, in a voice trembling with fear. "It was De Grasse who did it, not I." While he points to the covered sheet. "I had nothing whatsoever to do with it."

At that moment Welcome says, "Don't excite yourself, Salter. We know all about it." Then turning to two of his private detectives says: "Take him away. He'll get all that's coming to him later on," and Salter is lead, screaming, cursing and kicking from the tent.

"Thank heaven, he is out of the way," said the old Professor, holding Freda tightly in his arms. "My child, what a narrow escape you had. To find you and almost lose you again. Come, Freda, we will go. I am so happy, I don't know what to say."

"Hold on a minute, Professor," said Welcome. "Where do I come in. Why, Freda, you are not going to leave me all alone in America and go back with your father to Dresden, are you?"

"Forgive me, forgive me, Welcome," says Freda, springing into his arms. "I will never leave you as long as I live. Yes, I love you. I want every one here to know how much I love you. Father," said Freda, "you love him, too, don't you?"

"Yes," said the old Professor, "I love him as much as I would love my own son if I had one."

"Thank you, Professor," said Welcome. "The feeling is mutual. You won my heart the first time I spoke to you."

"So," said Heinrich, "you are not going back to Dresden with me and take your rightful place again."

"No, Heinrich, my daughter Freda has shown me the right way, as well as my son—who is to be"—gazing fondly at Welcome. "I shall remain with them in America."

"Good old Professor," said Welcome joyfully. "You will always find a home with me and Freda as long as we live. We want you. We want you all the time. Don't we, Freda?" Turning fondly to her and putting his arms lovingly around the old Professor's neck.

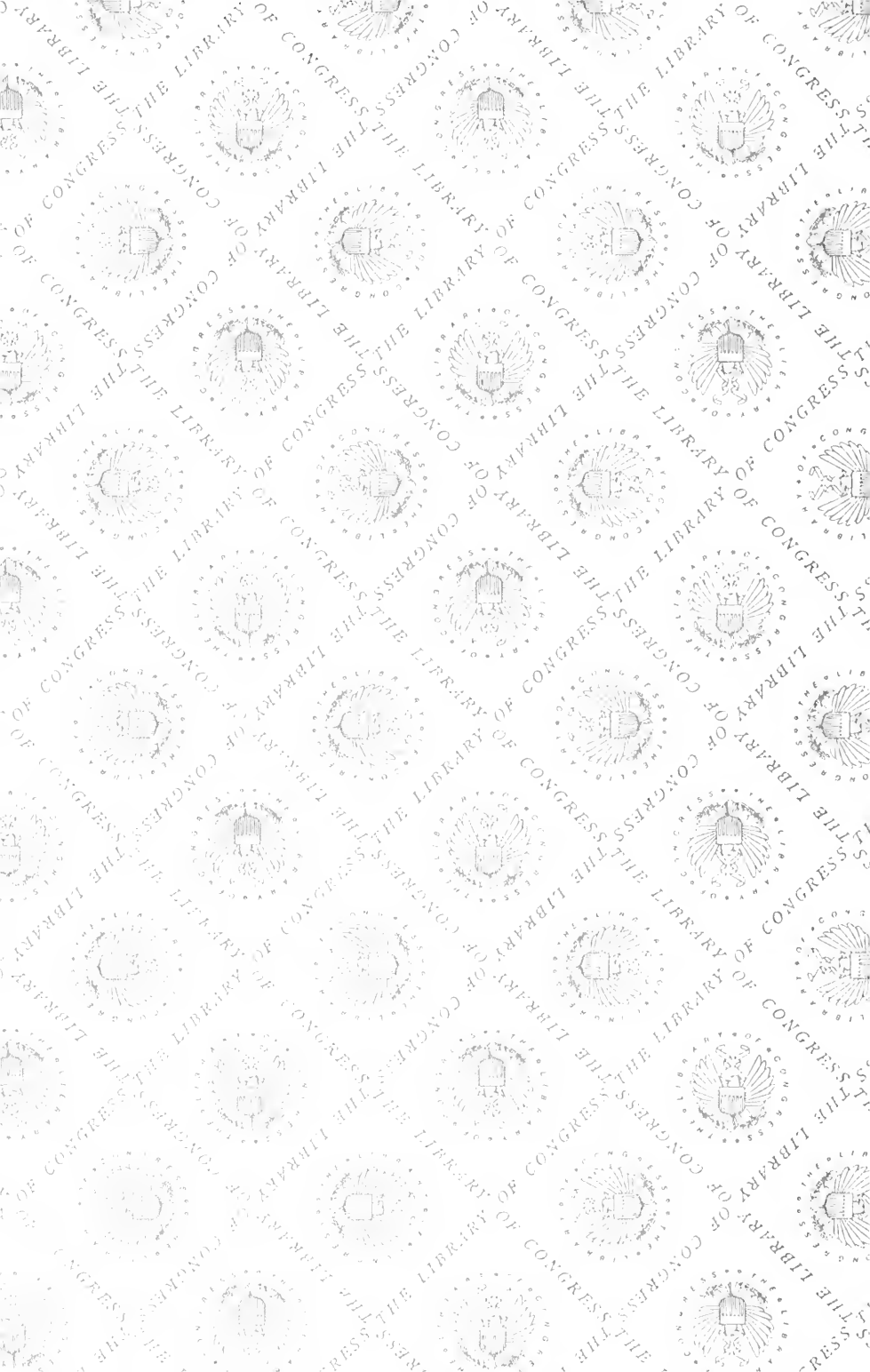
"There," said the Professor to his brother Heinrich. "You see how it is. I can't go back with you. Nevertheless you go and tell all my old friends, if I still have any left in Dresden who still believe in me, that I have found a new home among new friends and new hopes, and a new life. That I have no desire to go back with you, as I have been born all over again, and in my daughter's and my son's love, shall commence life all over again. Send me my share in my estate for my daughter's dowry and all will be well. "Good-bye," said he turning abruptly away and saying, "Come, Freda, come, my son, we will go."

While Heinrich and his son Franz stand looking after them. Just as the Professor is about to lift the flap of the tent door, Heinrich cries: "Brother, won't you forgive me for the wrong I have done you?" While the Professor stands hesitatingly, not knowing for the moment what to do.

"Father, father," softly says Freda, kissing him. "Forgive him for my sake, won't you, and for the sake of Franz?"

"For your sake my child, I would forgive the world. "So, Heinrich, Franz, give me your hands. I forgive you with all my heart and soul, and also say to you both good-bye forever."

"Come, my children," and the Professor with his arm about Freda and Welcome, walk slowly out of the tent into the night (as the curtain falls).



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